

CERCOSPORA AND SEPTORIA LEAF SPOTS OF FLOWERING DOGWOOD

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Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida L.) is a popular landscaping tree for northern Florida. Its attractive, white, petal-like bracts appear in February and March and are followed by abundant green foliage (1).

Leaf spots caused by the fungi Septoria cornicola Desm. and Cercospora cornicola Tracy and Earle initially appear on the lower leaves of the tree from midsummer through early fall. Defoliation and reduced tree vigor may result from heavy infection (3,5).

SYMPTOMS. Cercospora leaf spot is characterized by angular to irregularly shaped tan to brown areas from 2 to 6 mm in length with diffuse borders (Fig. 1A). Under optimal moisture conditions, the fungus sporulates abundantly on the top surface of the leaf spot and numerous scattered dark tufts of conidiophores can be observed with a hand lens at 10X magnification.

Septoria leaf spot is characterized by angular to irregularly shaped dark brown to purplish areas which later may become light brown to gray in the center with darkened borders (Fig. 1B). The leaf spots are similar in size to those caused by Cercospora. Septoria produces conidia in pycnidia which are submerged in the necrotic tissues of the leaf spot and not readily observed.

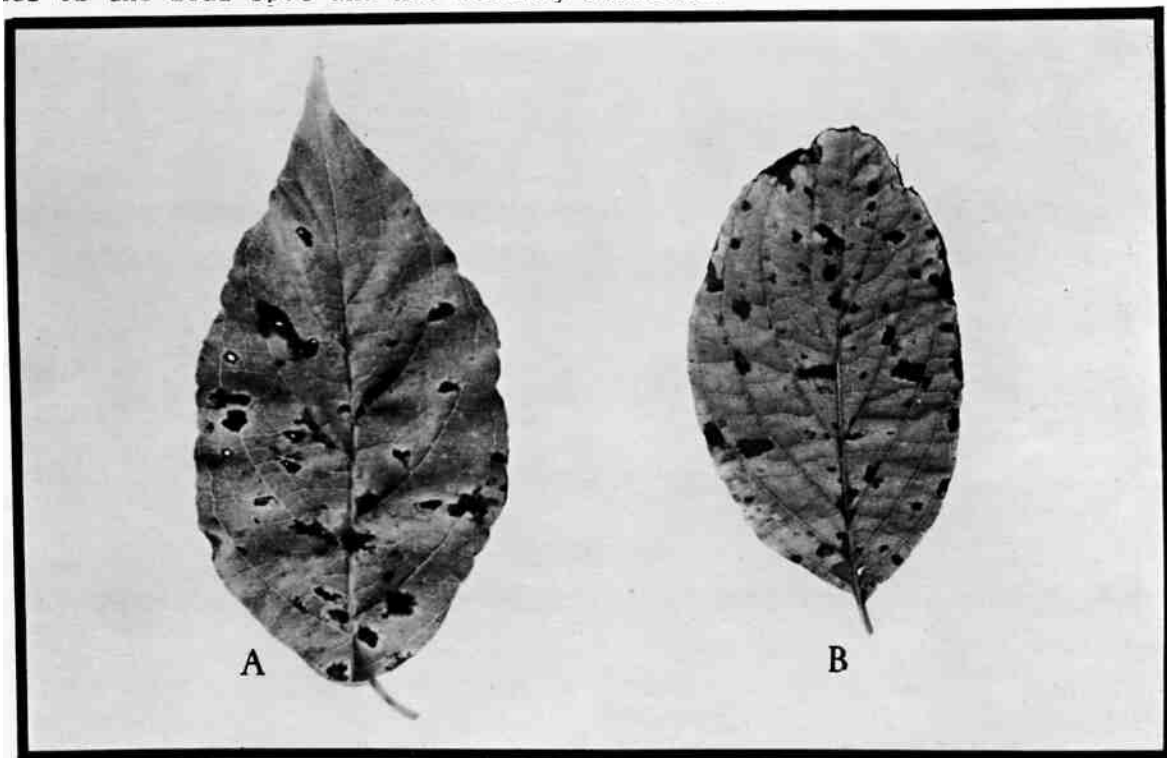


Fig. 1. Leaf spots of flowering dogwood caused by Cercospora cornicola (A) and Septoria cornicola (B).

CONTROL. A fungicidal spray program for spot anthracnose will effectively control *Cercospora* and *Septoria* leaf spots (1,2,3,4,6). Captan (2 lb/100 gal) or maneb (1 ½ lb/100 gal) plus a spreader-sticker will provide good control if applied at each of the following times during the growing season: 1) blossom bud burst, 2) unfolding of blossoms, 3) unfolding of leaves, 4) full expansion of leaves, and 5) at 3 to 4 week intervals until blossom bud formation in the fall. More frequent sprays at 2-week intervals may be needed if moist conditions are prevalent.

Literature Cited

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